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ABSTRACT

While many youngsters today are successfully mastering the life and career planning process, too many others are not. One faulty coping mechanism is premature closure, the untimely and ill-considered self-narrowing of alternatives. The goal of this project was to help counselors, teachers, and principals develop the insights and skills necessary to counteract forms of premature closure and biases based upon gender, socioeconomic class, and perceived ability. Seventy-one junior high and middle schools were selected to participate in the 3-year project. Recommendations drawn from the project's experiences included: (1) vocational and technical education has no image or an unappealing image to students; (2) self-esteem is the foundation upon which educational and psychological effectiveness is built; (3) policies and procedures must be implemented to generate data for use in rational decision making; (4) more support for organized career and life planning activities is needed, as well as more professional services; (5) the proportion of counselor time devoted to the special education and talented students should be in proportion to the size of these groups; (6) reality must not be exaggerated, distorted, or oversimplified; and (7) the economic and social environment needs to be improved. Providing comprehensive career guidance and life planning guidance services for junior high and middle school students can be an effective way to bring personal meaning to their school experiences. (ABL)

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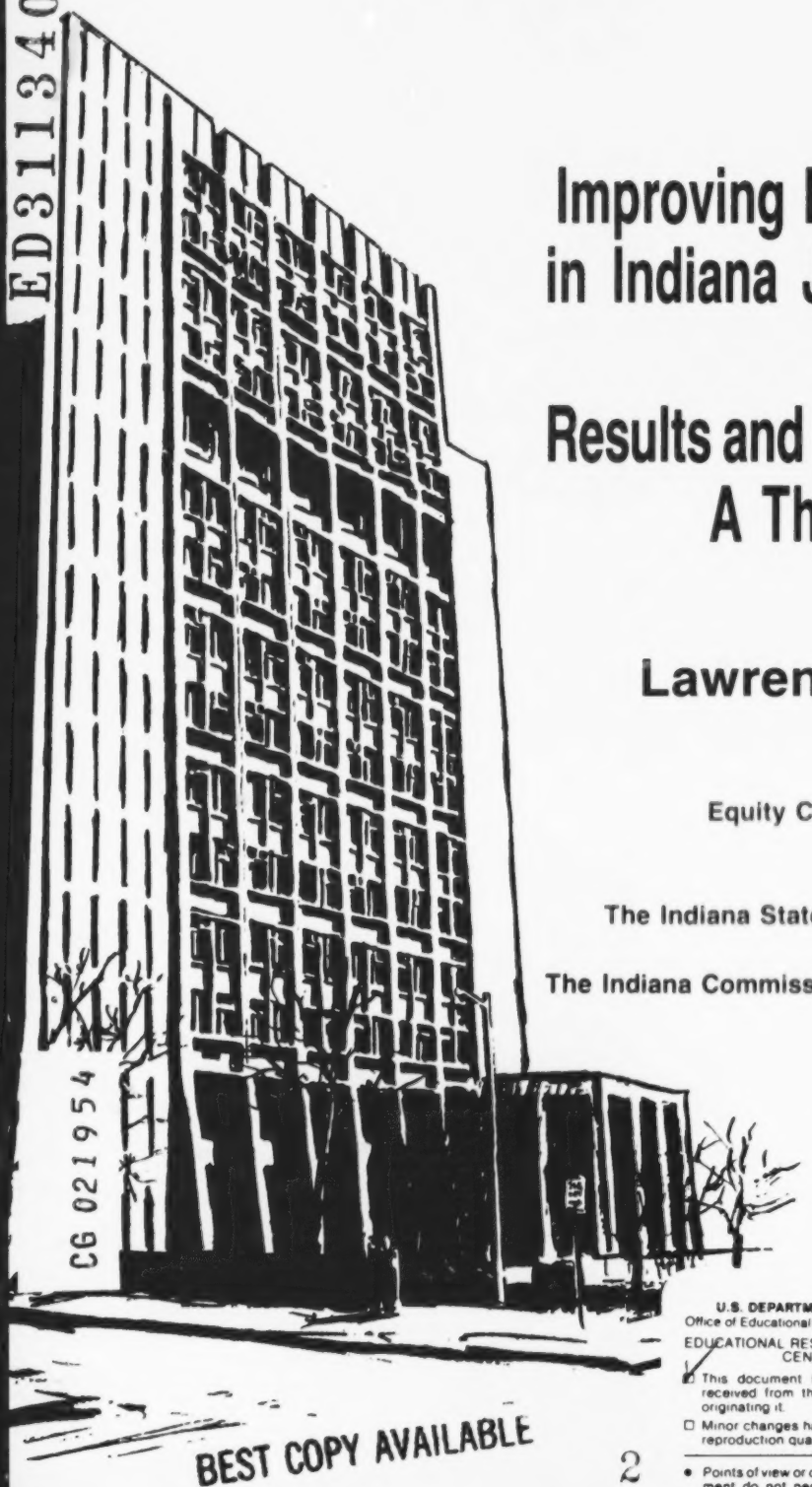

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Improving Equity Career Guidance in Indiana Junior High and Middle Schools: Results and Recommendations From A Three Year Project

Lawrence Beymer, Ph.D.

Equity Career Guidance Monograph #4

Sponsored by
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IMPROVING EQUITY CAREER GUIDANCE IN INDIANA JUNIOR HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS: RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A THREE YEAR PROJECT

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RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

During the last half of this decade Indiana has been undergoing major social, economic, and political changes. Adults are not the only ones who have had to adjust to these conditions. Youngsters preparing themselves for the future have discovered that all of these uncertainties create severe planning and preparation complications. Life and career planning has never been easy, but in today's context it has become even more of a challenge. As both the structure and the rules of the game change dramatically and in unforeseen and unpredicted directions, old rules and procedures become obsolete. While many youngsters today are successfully mastering the life and career planning process, others--- too many others, are not.

Some deal with anxieties associated with uncertainties by becoming passive, being physically present in the classroom but psychologically elsewhere. Classroom subject matter and activities are perceived as being irrelevant. Not necessarily troublemakers, they give only sporadic or token attention to classroom tasks. Some become truants, resulting in high rates of absenteeism. Others, perhaps as many as a third of the potential graduates, formalize the break with formal education by dropping out of school ill-prepared to function adequately in either the economic or social systems of our society.

Another faulty coping system is premature closure, the untimely and ill-considered self-narrowing of choice alternatives. The unconscious goal seems to be that of reducing stresses and tensions associated with being undecided and uncertain. In one form the individual makes a hasty choice in an attempt to ease internal and/or external pressures and anxieties. Somehow it is felt that any choice is better than admitting indecision. Only later does the person come to realize the high price paid for this temporary peace of mind. In another form the individual reduces options by impulsively rejecting huge blocks of alternatives on the basis of stereotypes, misinformation, and biases.

This project was designed to attack this problem by finding ways to expand the range of career options of young adolescents. We wanted to help their counselors, teachers, and principals develop the insights and skills necessary to counteract both forms of premature closure and biases based upon gender, socio-economic class, and perceived ability.

Seven specific goals were established for this project.

1. To help junior high and middle schools shift the criterion for successful career development guidance from that of pressing for an early, single, specific choice to that of formulating a list of several possibilities, perhaps including one or two probabilities.

2. To help youngsters at this age to understand that it is acceptable, normal, and desirable that they not yet have a single choice in mind at this stage of their development.

3. To help students, parents, teachers, and counselors to become aware of the several kinds of erroneous and counterfeit information that may inadvertently cause young people to self-limit their life plans and goals. Among these are sources of bias and inequities based upon gender, geographical location, socio-economic class, ethnic and racial identity, and/or ability to finance formal education.

4. To help students replace the question, "What are you going to do when you leave school?" with "What kind of a life do you want for yourself when you are 25?" The rationale is that in rapidly-changing times like these, nobody can answer the first question with much accuracy, and if the student can establish some personal goals for the foreseeable future, it may be possible to use that target in order to make school more meaningful.

5. To re-emphasize the idea that the individual still has considerable control in inventing his or her own future, even in a state where many traditional opportunities are disappearing and new ones are emerging.

6. To help students and parents understand that vocational and technical education can serve as the means toward the broad goals of education as well as a direct means to a productive, successful, satisfying life.

7. To develop a research network among our participating schools, developing sources of data which will make it possible for all of us to make better decisions. At the same time, the communication network being established between our participating schools and job-alike educators will make it possible for us to share ideas and materials.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

The proposal for the project was submitted to the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education late in 1986. Funded early in 1987 and extended for a year with no increase in budget, it concluded on September 30, 1989.

An overview of the project was sent to 393 junior high and middle schools in the state, and 125 responded with expressions of interest. From this list 72 schools of various settings and sizes, spread geographically throughout the state were selected. One had to withdraw, so the project began with 71 participating schools. The names of these participating schools and a state map showing their locations appear on the back cover of this monograph. The six regions represent area groupings for

workshop assignments and other communication networks.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

During the three years of this project a wide variety of activities and services occurred; while space limitations prohibit detailed explanations, the following summaries indicate the scope and variety of activity.

Professional development. Six full-day workshops were held around the state to build insights, skills, and motivation among project counselors, teachers, and administrators. Indiana vocational directors were brought together for a two-day workshop for the same purposes. All project participants gathered on the Indiana State University campus for three days to share experiences and ideas, grow in knowledge and commitment to equity issues, and to make plans for local action activities. Project schools interested in increased parental involvement attended a one-day workshop, and 10 schools exploring career beliefs sent representatives to a two day workshop. In addition to Indiana State University staff, national experts including Dr. Sunny Hansen, Dr. John Krumboltz, and Dr. Ken Hoyt participated in these events. As a result of all of these activities, the professional skills and competencies of hundreds of Indiana educators have been substantially augmented.

Creation and publication of original materials. Two video tapes, one a stimulus tape for group discussion and another depicting Indiana workers in non-traditional settings were produced and distributed to all project schools for their use. Four monographs were published and distributed to all junior high and middle schools in the state. Newsletters informed project schools of events and activities.

Direct school services. Consultants and project staff made approximately 180 visits to project schools. A panel of college students pursuing non-traditional careers appeared before 5,500 students in 17 schools. Schools who needed specific resources and materials to support their activities were supplied with requested printed, video, and computer materials. Others were circulated from the project office on an as-needed loan basis.

Collection of facts. In an attempt to acquire information for rational decision-making, several research investigations took place in our participating schools. Three comprehensive surveys of career and life planning were conducted. A study to determine patterns of job stereotyping and one seeking to understand correlates of gender stereotyping were completed. A pilot investigation of career beliefs occurred. The results of these studies have been published in monograph form or will be released in the autumn of 1989. Summaries of their major findings are presented later in this monograph.

Sharing with the profession. Programs about this project were presented before audiences at 11 state and national conventions, with proposals for future programs at three more.

Popular press. Stories about the project activities and findings have appeared in several state newspapers and on several state television stations.

WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

At a career development conference held at the University of Michigan a few years ago, theorist John Holland was challenged by a member of the audience after his address about some of the information he had just reported. His response was, "You may be correct, madam, but my conclusions emerge from where my data have led me. Where has your data led you?"

In recent years, many broad generalizations about the status of equity fair career guidance and counseling have been spoken and printed. Most of these have been supported by little more than the beliefs, convictions, biases, and vested interests of their speakers and writers. One of the major contributions of this project has been the accumulation of a considerable body of data which illuminate this issue considerably. This evidence confirms some suspicions, does not support others, and suggests some issues and conditions previously overlooked and neglected.

The ideal research investigation is characterized by the randomization of a large number of subjects. Selecting schools for such a large project as this by random selection was impossible for obvious reasons. Care was taken to choose schools of various sizes and settings from all areas of the state. While no claim is made or implied that these are "random" schools it is reasonable to assume that this 18% sample of all of our Indiana junior high and middle schools is satisfactorily representative.

As for numbers, the literature reports no other such project or investigation based upon so many participating schools or subjects. The first survey involved 6,756 7th and 8th grade boys and girls from the 71 schools, the second 5,464 from 58 project schools, the third approximately 3,250. The more in-depth investigations involved fewer schools and students, but in every case the numbers were impressive. The study on job titles versus job descriptions as stimuli to gender bias was conducted in 39 schools and involved 2,963 boys and girls. The in-depth study seeking insights on possible correlates of attitudes toward gender-stereotyped careers and perceived abilities was conducted in nine project schools and involved data from 857 students. The career beliefs survey involved 3,200 students from 10 project schools.

As usual, the reader must note the traditional disclaimer that the nature of the sample must be taken into consideration when making generalizations; however, the large number of schools and the large number of students participating should result in considerable confidence in the reliability and validity of these findings. The facts, clues, and insights produced in this project are worthy of serious study and consideration.

Two sets of findings will be reported. The first are those which are supported by hard facts and statistical evidence. The second group includes those supported by observations made during on-site visits, the judgments of our participating counselors, teachers, and administrators, and staff speculations stemming from three years of experience and involvement with the project.

Generalizations Supported By Conclusive Evidence

1. Middle school and junior high school students are concerned about their future life and career, and ready for organized assistance. While some adults suspect that all pre-adolescents think about are music, sports, clothes, recreation, and the opposite sex, only one in 20 in our two large survey samples reported that they hadn't yet thought about planning for their future life and career.

Approximately one student in four has already made a career decision and is confident that this choice will be final, even though those who indicate this will not enter the work force in a career entry position for at least a decade.

2. Today's Indiana young adolescents are extremely optimistic about their future. Approximately half believe that in comparison with their parents their life style will be higher and better. Slightly less than half believe it will be about the same, and only a few fear that it will be less and lower, although that number doubled from 1987-88 to 1988-89. Their optimism exceeds that of many "experts" who have speculated that many youngsters in this generation are unlikely to reach let alone exceed the standard of living now enjoyed by their parents.

3. Indiana young adolescents have great expectations about their education. Over 90% expect to graduate from high school. That would be a dramatic improvement over current levels of retention.

4. Approximately two-thirds of seventh and eighth grade boys and girls expect to become college graduates. This number increased from 66% in 1987-88 to 69% in 1988-89, suggesting that the promotion and propaganda campaign encouraging college attendance is having the desired results. Current evidence suggests that in recent years about one Indiana high school senior in four entered a four-year college and only about half completed a baccalaureate degree. Unless massive and dramatic changes occur soon in schools, colleges, and society, this level of expectation seems to be overly optimistic.

5. By the seventh and eighth grades at least half of the boys and girls have already rejected vocational and technical education as either a post secondary education or career alternative. From 1987 to 1988 the number expecting to complete vocational or technical school declined from 23% to 18%. Either they do not know much about this option, or this alternative has an excessively negative image, or both.

6. The young Hoosier adolescent

who has a wide range of career possibilities under consideration and feels that several are possible and attainable is most likely (1) to have a positive sense of personal worth and self-esteem, (2) to be able to process career and personal information in a complex manner, (3) be female, and (4) come from a middle class family which includes both parents. These generalizations are unequivocal. It should be noted that the first two of these factors, the most powerful influences, are learned traits and therefore can be taught; therefore, the most important deficits are remediable. This is a very important and optimistic finding.

7. Young Indiana adolescents are most likely to react to careers in a sexist stereotyped manner if occupational titles are presented rather than descriptions of the kind of work that is performed. Indiana males at this age are more gender stereotyped in their reactions to jobs than are females, and boys in metropolitan and suburban schools are more stereotyped in their reactions than boys who attend schools in town and rural communities. Both males and females who indicate that certain careers are suitable for either sex are likely to reject those possibilities for themselves.

8. When data from students is separated on the basis of gender, certain differences appear between the boys and the girls.

We discovered that in comparison with boys, girls report higher English and math grades, and more "A" and B" grades overall. (The folk wisdom that girls earn lower grades than boys in math is not supported by these findings.) Girls expect to have a similar future life style as boys but expect lower overall earnings. Girls are more likely than boys to say that they will attend and graduate from college. More girls express interest in occupations traditionally dominated by males than vice versa, but this trend seems to be related to the additional income and prestige which come with the career than to any gender correlate. Girls show interest in occupations which require more education and higher economic rewards. They are more likely to say that their minds are still open to new career possibilities.

An equal number of boys than girls report "A" grades in science and social studies. More boys expect to work full-time after high school, plan to complete vocational/technical training, and to enter the armed services. Boys express more gender stereotyping when presented job titles for evaluation. Boys are more likely to eliminate many jobs from consideration and to narrow the choice list sooner. More boys say that they have made a final decision and boys are less willing than girls to consider other possibilities.

9. Some differences exist between seventh and eighth grade students. Reported grades are slightly lower for 8th graders. There is a sharp drop in the number expecting to complete vocational-technical training between the 7th and 8th grades. At this transition the number of girls planning to attend college also declines.

10. When students planning to be

college graduates are compared to those intending to graduate from vocational and technical school, it is found that students who report an intention to enroll in college report grades that are one-half grade higher than students who have no such plans.

Variables associated with plans to complete vocational/technical training are, in descending order of significance, average grades, parents who have completed such training, not having thought much about their career decisions, and the expectation of a somewhat less or lower future lifestyle. The "C" and "D" students tend to be more interested in completing vocational/technical training.

11. An intention to enter the armed forces after graduation is associated with being male, having lower grades, and expecting a much less and lower lifestyle than their parents. For girls, the higher the level of education of parents, the less the interest in armed forces careers.

12. Family type is associated with several findings. The level of parent education is associated with the grades of their children, and grades are associated with all career and life planning expectations of those children, including college attendance. Students who indicate that they come from single parent homes tend to report lower grades; indicate that they have made a final choice; are less likely to change their minds; and expect a higher and better life style for themselves than that of their parents. In general, anything other than being with at least one natural parent appears to have negative associations and consequences.

13. The educational level of the mother is associated more with the son or daughter's plans to enroll in higher education than is the education level of the father. This pattern holds true for both sexes, but is especially high for girls.

14. By the 7th and 8th grade, both boys and girls have received powerful messages about their academic status and are on tracks headed toward specific destinations. Whether they are placed on the tracks or choose them themselves is unclear.

[Additional findings, statistics, and further discussion of the project findings can be found in Project Monograph #1 and Project Monograph #3, available upon request.]

Speculations From Observations

1. Counselors in today's Indiana junior high and middle schools are called upon to serve an unreasonably large number of individuals. Even with the best of intentions it is difficult to find time within the compacted school day to interact with individuals or groups in a counseling and guidance relationship concerning life and career planning or anything else.

2. The typical day of the counselors we have come to know is dominated by crisis management and clerical and accounting procedures associated with academic

scheduling, attendance, and standardized testing. By role too many counselors function primarily as quaisi administrators and high-priced clerks.

3. Counselors report that the "kids in the middle" are being overlooked; priorities for attention, services, and programs are targeted at the small percentages of youngsters at the extremes of the behavior and ability distributions.

4. Most counselors and teachers involved in this project recognize the potential positive contributions parents can make to the educational process, but are frustrated in finding successful ways to interface the school with busy family time conflicts and commitments.

5.Counselors, teachers, and administrators have the capacity to teach each other through professional interactions focused about common concerns. Nobody knows as much as everybody, and everybody together really knows a great deal. Tapping this rich resource has produced positive results. We have observed this phenomenon many times in our meetings and workshops.

6. When data from boys and girls are compared, a consistent pattern emerges: girls are succeeding better in mastering the career and life planning process. The hypothesis of premature closure seems to explain the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations of young male adolescents. It is as if their felt sense of insecurity becomes overwhelming by the 8th grade, and they respond by making impulsive, narrow choices, closing their minds to alternatives, and downgrading plans and expectations for themselves. It seems clear that junior high and middle school males are in dire need of guidance and counseling services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for public policy are justified by the activities and findings of this project.

1. The State Board of Education, Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, and the Higher Education Commission should unite efforts to promote post-secondary education. Today the efforts of these three agencies are out of synchronization and unnecessarily competitive. "Going to college" is not the only and for many not the wisest investment of state and personal time, money, and effort. Other courses of action may have more potential for success for the individual and society, and should not be relegated to the level of a "last resort for losers." At least at this level, the emphasis needs to be on promoting and encouraging all forms of post-secondary education and life long learning. The appropriate specifics can emerge during the high school years.

2. Vocational and technical education seems to have either no image or an unappealing image among junior high and middle school students. It appears that today they either know little about this option, or what they do know is negative. We need to learn why and take steps toward remediating the situation.

3. Evidence generated in this project proves again that self-esteem is the foundation upon which educational and psychological effectiveness is built. For over 30 years theorists have contended that thinking and behavior is determined by the concepts the individual holds about self and abilities. The development of clear, well-formulated, realistic self-concepts and maximum self esteem has been suggested by many as one of the major goals of education for the adolescent.

Students studied in nine project schools demonstrated that those with high self esteem were much more advanced and more successfully managing the life and career planning process. This would seem to justify reviewing current school policies and practices in an attempt to identify ways in which self-esteem can be built in all students. In medicine, the term "iatrogenic disease" refers to those disorders caused by attempts to diagnose or treat other symptoms. Perhaps schools like hospitals should consider the extent to which they might be part of the problem as well as a potential setting for the solutions. As in the case of medicine, we may not intend to do harm as we diagnose and treat but that very well might occur inadvertently.

Recent attempts to "reform" education in Indiana have included massive standardized testing, mandatory summer school, stern grade retention standards, sorting and labeling of students, academic tracking, increased requirements for graduation, and a narrowed range of approved opportunities to achieve and excel. For some, perhaps for many, this may be appropriate. But what effects are these procedures having on those who lack sufficient motivation and ability to compete and succeed within these narrow rules? How many of our youngsters leave school either as graduates or as drop outs with negative feelings about themselves and feelings of inadequacy? Perhaps we should find out, and then initiate steps to maximize the number of those who leave with feelings of positive self-worth and self-efficacy.

4. Policies and procedures must be implanted and implemented to automatically generate valid and reliable data for use in rational decision making. Today many generalizations about schools and education, about students and their status, are little more than averages of guesses and estimates. We collect information on the honor system, forcing school officials to devise their own definitions and procedures and then submit understandably self-serving data. (As an example, some schools claimed high retention rates in a study of drop outs, but within months reported a high drop out rate when "at risk" money became available.)

Students should be identified and monitored individually from their very first entry into the public or private school system. We need to know who and where they are as they move through school and from school to school. Now we deal only in gross numbers, and information about the status and progress of individuals gets lost. In the age of

microcomputers and fax machines this is unnecessary.

5. The junior high and middle school years need more of the right kinds of attention. More support is needed for sequential and organized guidance and career and life planning activities. Vocational and technical educators must find ways to communicate the true nature of these options. At the same time policy makers must protect students from pressures and propaganda from those who are more interested in their own needs than in the welfare of the students.

The middle grade years are the time for exploration, for discovering identity and competencies and possible alternatives for future development. This is an endangered environment today, assaulted by forces which would narrow, restrict, and transform these experiences in directions not in the best interests of either students or society.

6. The proportion of counselor time devoted to the special education students at the bottom of the academic ability curve and the academically talented at the top should be in proportion to the size of these groups in the school population. Today the two-thirds in the middle are not receiving a fair proportion of attention and services of an academic or guidance nature. More attention needs to be given to the educational welfare of the students in the middle of the normal curve. This can be accomplished without diminishing services to students who are academically handicapped or talented.

Both gold and nylon are valuable commodities, but they are fundamentally different. Gold exists in an already created form, waiting to be discovered and put to use. Nylon is something that is produced by the clever combination of very common substances: coal, air, and water. Human talent is more like nylon than gold; it is something that can be created from common materials found almost anywhere. It emerges when we exercise a conviction to maximize the performance of ordinary people rather than valuing only the few who already possess rare and unique characteristics.

Education should be concerned with producing winners, not just in identifying them; creating success, not just taking credit for what already exists; developing talent, not just exploiting it whenever and wherever it is found. The social and economic future of Indiana lies more in how well we can educate the B and C students than what we do for those who are at either the A+ or D- levels.

7. More professional guidance and counseling services are needed in our schools. This does not necessarily mean more counselors, because necessary funding may not be available, more licensed counselors may not exist in sufficient numbers, and nothing would be gained by rushing the quasi-qualified into the battle only partially prepared to master the challenges. Why not free up counselors now in place to practice their profession by easing their enormous paperwork responsibilities?

One approach might be to create a para-professional position called the School Registrar. This person would be the authorized record keeper through which all information about students goes into and out of the school's records. Another help would be a microcomputer program which handles all academic, attendance, special education, disciplinary, welfare, juvenile justice, and other records, making it possible to enter and extract information efficiently and effectively. A program custom designed for Indiana schools would be of great benefit to all concerned.

8. The public must come to evaluate schools on not only the ability of their students to produce high test scores but on how well graduates are prepared to assume all young adult responsibilities. Graduates will be spouses, parents, consumers, citizens, voters, and (we hope) contributing members of the economic system as workers. And some of them will function as advanced students in academic settings. We need competence in all of these roles, and all need recognition and reinforcement.

9. In our zeal and enthusiasm to motivate youngsters in the direction of more education, we must take care not to exaggerate, distort, or oversimplify reality, no matter how noble our goals and intentions. Several such myths have received widespread circulation in recent years. Three examples will be noted here.

"If and when advancement in literacy takes place, then economic advancement and social progress will follow." An analysis of historical data suggests that improvements in literacy and education tend to follow, rather than precede or cause economic and social improvements. This may not be what the public, politicians, and press want to hear, but it is a sequence supported by considerable evidence.

"The Indiana economy needs more college graduates in the work force to stimulate economic vitality." Statistics show that Indiana colleges and universities produce a surplus of college graduates. Comprehensive data are most difficult to acquire because not all institutions of higher education are willing to disclose the fate of their graduates, but the best estimate is that today no more than half of the graduates of Indiana colleges and universities remain in Indiana. For example, in 1988 the largest state school of business placed only 35% of their BS/BA graduates and only 19% of their MS/MBA graduates in Indiana positions. Stated another way, approximately 2 out of 3 of their baccalaureate graduates and 4 out of 5 of their graduate school graduates took jobs in other states. The same trend exists for the state's largest producer of engineers and scientists; therefore it not justifiable to claim that the Indiana economy needs more business leaders and managers, engineers and scientists. We have insufficient job opportunities for those we educate now, and our export of trained college graduates is right up there with auto parts and soybeans.

"The school children of today will become the workers of tomorrow, and that work will be highly

technical. Not being able to function at advanced levels with mathematics, computers, robots, science, and sophisticated communication dooms the individual to failure in future job search and success." The fact of the matter is that most jobs will continue to be low tech or no tech in nature. No high-tech type occupations are included in the list of the 10 occupations expected to employ the largest numbers of new workers between now and 1995. Changes in the work place are more likely to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The traditional occupations are going to continue to dominate the economy, employ the largest number of workers, and to have many openings for entry level beginners.

Apparently the press, politicians, and the public have confused those occupations increasing the largest per cent with those increasing the most in absolute number of workers they will employ.

Employment in trendy high tech occupations will grow rapidly in per cent, but actually account for only proportionately few new jobs: scientific and technical workers are expected to account for only six percent of all new jobs through 1995. Between 1986 and the year 2000 the economy is expected to generate 15.9 million additional jobs, and the largest 27 occupations which will account for most of these will not require extensive pre-employment training. Of course we will need specialists in science, medicine, engineering, and the other professions. But we will need many, many more workers in the areas of health care, retail sales, business operations, building maintenance, law enforcement, and other occupations where the workers may dress like professionals but actually perform blue-collar type work.

Many openings in the next decade will be replacement jobs as a result of retirements of older workers. Many other new entrants to the work force will be "contingent workers" -- temporary, part-time, leased or contract employees.

We need to reconsider the great emphasis now being placed upon advanced mathematics and science for all students regardless of motivation, ability, interest, or the necessity of these skills in their lives. And since service-producing industries are projected to account for about 90 per cent of all new jobs between 1984 and 1995, we need to insure that the Indiana school curriculum today is developing the necessary human relations understandings, abilities, and skills these young employees will really need.

10. The schools are but one small segment of society, and it is impossible for them to range very far ahead of the society within which they exist and function. Reasonable expectations for education must take into consideration the fact that youngsters actually spend only a small fraction of their lives in formal education settings. If a high school graduate attends school for twelve years, each of 180 six hour days, that calculates to only 11% of their awake hours up to that point under a schoolhouse roof. The rest of the

time is spent in learning environments provided by the family, community, and media. People who understand that milk does not just come out of cardboard boxes often assume that students just tumble out of yellow school busses. Both milk and kids are formulated somewhere else, and those environments determine the quality and potential of both.

In today's Indiana it is very difficult to build psychological security upon the shifting sands of economic insecurity. Unemployment and under-employment trigger every form of individual, family, and community problems known to educators, counselors, therapists, and law enforcement officials. Communities that develop job and economic opportunities need fewer family therapists, social workers, therapists, counselors, and law enforcement officers. And they also become settings for more successful schools. Our Indiana schools will improve significantly only if and when the Indiana economic and social environment which surrounds, influences, and supports them improves significantly.

The following recommendations for professional practice are justified by the activities and findings of this project.

1. Even within the crowded curriculum, time can be found to promote equity career and life planning activities in the junior high and middle schools of Indiana. This is happening now in many Indiana schools by creative and energetic educators. Some counselors work with English teachers in student writing of autobiographies. Some work with social studies teachers in student creation of histories of family educational and vocational experiences. Many provide printed and electronic resources to teachers, who in turn point out to students the career applications of subject matter. Such efforts have the potential to bring meaning and personalization to education. It is unnecessary for counselors to shoulder the entire burden of effective career and life planning guidance activities. Others are both willing and able to play an important part, and there is work enough for all.

2. Whenever possible, use job descriptions instead of job titles when dealing with career alternatives. Our research indicates that titles used alone are much more likely to result in gender stereotyping reactions.

3. In choosing a place to begin, high priority should be given to the needs of single parent families. Data from this project suggests that the children of single parents, particularly boys, are in many ways in great need of career and life planning guidance. For the typical single parent, "T G I F" is more likely to mean time, guilt, insecurity, and fatigue. For them, there doesn't ever seem to be enough time, energy, or money to make it possible to be as good a parent as they would like to be. Perhaps the schools can help by bringing together small groups of such parents to recognize shared common concerns and to work out cooperative arrangements for communication, programs, and services.

For all working parents, meetings with school officials are difficult to schedule. Because working parents are the norm and not the exception, consideration should be given to scheduling counseling office hours outside the regular school hours for both student and parent appointments. On some days the counselor might not come to school until noon, then stay for late afternoon or early evening meetings. Another alternative is extra pay for overtime office hours. If such arrangements conflict with collective bargaining agreements, then those rules should be changed or the counselors be reclassified as 10-month contract administrators. If schools are serious about working constructively with parents, then they must make appropriate efforts to make contact with parents.

4. One of the basic tenets of our economic system is that workers do more and better work when they perceive that they are working for themselves and acquiring such values as money, feelings of belonging, satisfaction, self-expression, and sense of accomplishment. One of the primary laws of learning is that we learn most effectively when the assignment has personal meaning. Not successfully adapting these principles in the schools today may explain why many students perceive formal education as being essentially irrelevant to their current or future lives.

The idea that one is supposed to go to school and achieve whatever the school demands in order to please parents, politicians, and the press is less than ineffective--- it distorts and damages the whole educational process. Enlightened self-interest can be a wonderful motivator. Students can be led to understand that the kind of life style they want for themselves in the future will come to them only in exchange for the contribution they are able to make to the economic and social system within which they will live and function.

Such an image of the future might be seen by students as being worth working toward and postponing and delaying pleasures for. While at one time in our society this ethic was practically universal, today the schools cannot take for granted that students possess this perspective. If it is a learned characteristic, then it can be taught. Teaching it is worth a try because if this value is not adopted many students and their schools will continue to interact as antagonists and adversaries.

CONCLUSION

Providing comprehensive career and life planning guidance services for junior high and middle school students can be an effective and efficient way to bring personal meaning to their school experiences. Youngsters at this age and stage are ready for such assistance, can learn from it, and as a consequence discover new connections between the mission of the schools and their personal long-range objectives. This approach is well within the philosophical mission of the modern junior high and middle school, and is a worthy and attainable goal for the students as well as for their teachers, administrators, and counselors.

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Project Products and Publications

Video Tape, **"Career Guidance Programs."** This tape contains two episodes designed to stimulate classroom discussion about the gender stereotyping of jobs. In each, a person is shown in a sequence of settings, with indicated places to stop the tape for discussion. At the end, the job of the individual is revealed to be not what the viewers might have guessed.

Video Tape, **"Indiana Non-Traditional Occupations."** This tape was put together from interviews conducted by project counselors, teachers, and students in several Indiana communities. It contains interviews of men and women working in non-traditional settings, each explaining the work they do, the life style that goes along with their work, and how they happened to make this choice.

Monograph #1, **"Career Expectations of Indiana's Young Adolescents"** by Michele Boyer, Ph.D. and John Jessell, Ph.D., November 1988. This publication presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the first project survey in late 1987 of 6,756 students in 71 project schools.

Monograph #2, **"Schools and Parents: Partners in Career Equity Guidance for Young Adolescents"** by Michele Boyer, Ph.D. and Arthur Horne, Ph.D., July, 1989. This publication contains recommendations on practical and proven ways to involve parents in the career and life planning activities of their young adolescents.

Monograph #3, **"Career Expectations Among Indiana Junior High and Middle School Students: A Second Survey."** John Jessell, Ph.D. and Michele Boyer, Ph.D., August, 1989. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the second project survey of 5,464 students in 58 project schools in late 1988, plus a comparison with first survey results.

Monograph #4, **"Improving Equity Career Guidance in Indiana Junior High and Middle Schools: Results and Recommendations From A Three Year Project"** by Lawrence Beymer, Ph.D., September 1989.

Catalog, **"Resource Materials Guide."** Published by the Equity Career Guidance Project, September, 1989. This catalog gives titles, descriptions, and sources of printed and electronic resources that project schools have found to be useful in conducting equity fair career and life planning activities. Many are available to borrow for preview or use by any Indiana junior high or middle school.

For copies of the above, contact
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CAREER GUIDANCE PROJECT

Participating Schools Listed
by Rural, Suburban, Town, and Metropolitan

RURAL

Argos Jr. High
Barr-Reeve Jr/Sr
Benjamin Rush Jr. High
Bloomfield Jr. High
Central Noble Middle
Churubusco Jr. High
Covington Middle School
Hagerstown Jr/Sr High
Knightstown Jr. High
Lewis Cass Jr/Sr High
Liberty Jr. High
Lowell Middle School
Mt. Vernon Jr. High
North Judson Jr. High
North Knox Jr. High
North Putnam Jr/Sr High
Owen Valley Middle School
Shenandoah Middle School
Shoals Jr/Sr High
South Adams Jr. High
South Vermillion Middle
Southern Wells Jr. High
Tri-Central Jr. High
Tri-County Middle School
Triton Middle
Wakarusa Middle School
West Jay Jr. High
Westview Jr. High
Wheeler Jr/Sr High
Winamac Community Middle

SUBURBAN

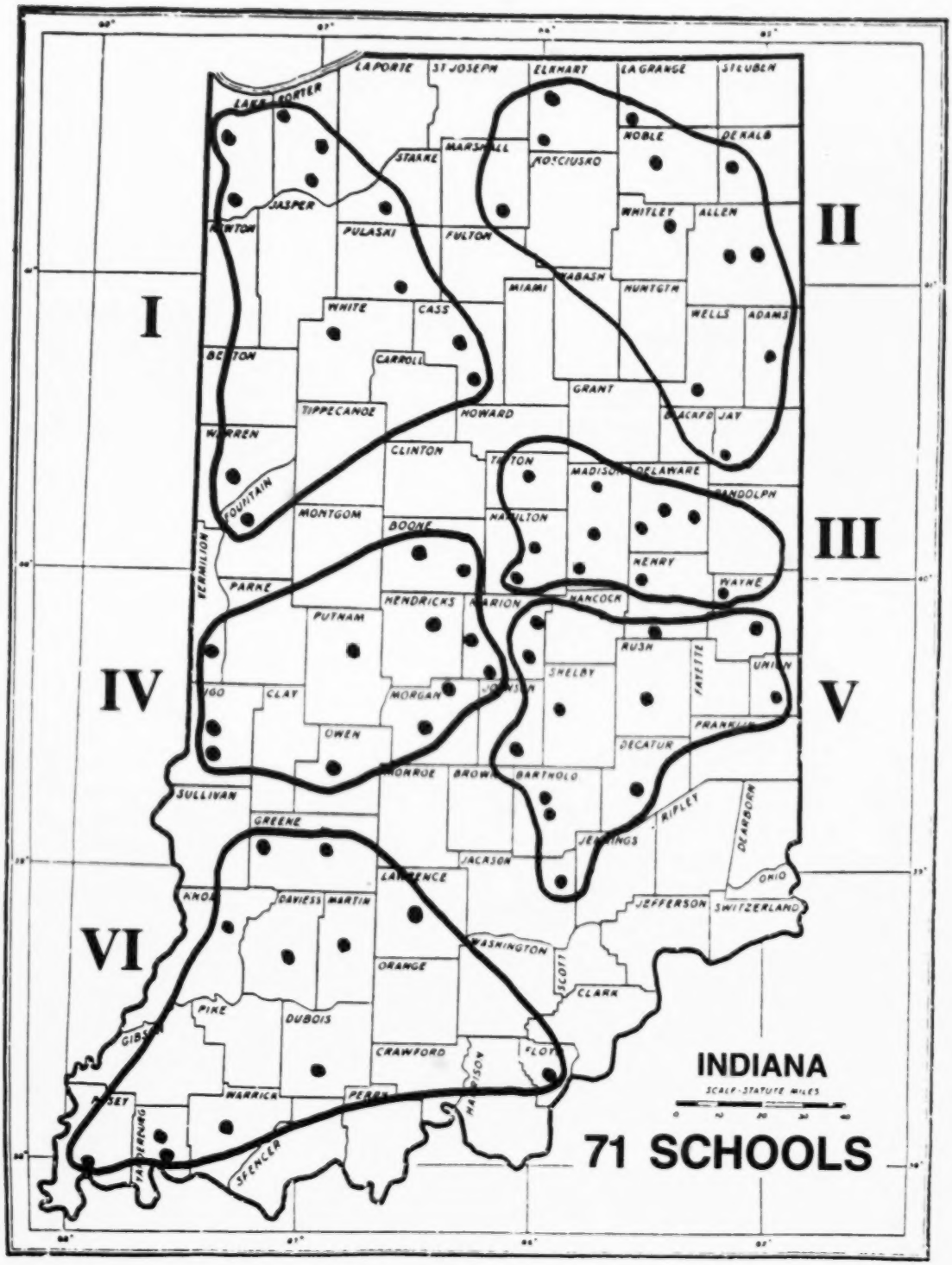
Alexandria Middle School
Boone Grove Jr/Sr High
Boonville Jr. High
Brownsburg Jr. High
Carmel Jr. High
Concord Jr. High
Edinburgh Comm. Jr/Sr High
Franklin Township Middle
Garrett Jr. High
Hamilton Southeastern
Heritage Jr/Sr High
Kahler Middle School
Lebanon Middle School
Martinsville West Middle
Nathaniel Scribner Jr.
Paul Hadley Jr. High
Pendleton Middle School
Selma Middle School
Yorktown Middle School
Zionsville Middle

TOWN

Bedford Jr. High
Central Middle School
Dennis Middle School
Greensburg Jr. High
Lincoln Middle School
Linton Jr. High
Northside Middle School
Seymour Middle School
Southridge Middle School

METROPOLITAN

Belzer Middle School
Ben Davis Jr. High
Creston Jr. High
Evans Middle School
Honey Creek Jr. High
Lane Middle School
Muncie Northside
Northside Middle School
Sarah Scott
Seeger Jr. High
Thompkins Middle School
Willowcreek Middle School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PULASKI
FULTON
WHITLEY
ALLEN
WABASH
MIAMI
HUNTGTN
WHITE
CASS
WELLS
ADAMS
BENTON
CARROLL
GRANT
TIPPECANOE
HOWARD
BLACKFD
JAY
WARREN
CLINTON
TIPTON
MADISON
DELAWARE
RANDOLPH
FOUNTAIN
MONTGOM
BOONE
HAMILTON
HENRY
VERMILION
PARKE
WAYNE
HENDRICKS
MARION
HANCOCK
PUTNAM
RUSH
FAYETTE
UNION
SHELBY
VIGO
CLAY
MORGAN
JOHNSON
FRANKLIN
OWEN
DECATUR
MONROE
BROWN
BARTHOLO
SULLIVAN
RIPLEY
DEARBORN
GREENE
JENNINGS
JACKSON
LAWRENCE
OHIO
KNOX
DAVIESS
MARTIN
JEFFERSON
SWITZERLAND
WASHINGTON
ORANGE
SCOTT
CLARK
PIKE
DUBOIS
GIBSON
CRAWFORD
FLOYD
HARRISON
WARRICK
PERRY
POSEY
SPENCER
VANDERBURGH
INDIANA
SCALE-STATUTE MILES
71 SCHOOLS